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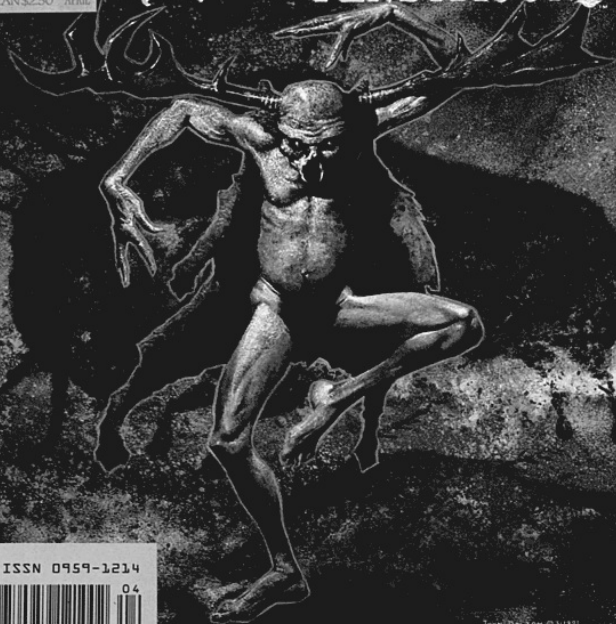
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The NIGHTS of PENDRAGON



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John DeLano © 3-1991

"AND WHEN THE SANK GRIL
HAD BENE BORNE THOROW
THE HALL, THAN THE HOLY
VESSEL DEPARTED SUDDENLY,
THAT THEY WYST NAT WHERE
HIT BECAM."

Sir Thomas Malory, WORKS XIII

FLANDERS, 1915. I HAD BECOME
A PENDRAGON, AND WAS ABOUT
TO BECOME AWARE OF THE OTHER.

"THAT ELECTRIC SPARK OF
RECOGNITION THAT ALL
PENDRAGONS SHARE WOKE
ME TO IT ONE STILLING
EVENING IN LATE SUMMER.

"IT WAS MY
OPPOSITE, THE
ANTITHESIS OF
EVERYTHING MY
POWER REPRESENTED. I SHOULD
HAVE EXPECTED
SUCH A THING
TO EXIST..."

"...BUT I WAS NOT
PREPARED FOR THE
HORROR OF THE
BANE."

PRETTY CHILD
OF LIGHT... HOW
QUIETLY SHALL YOU
PERISH.



'IT WAS THEN, SO VERY CLEARLY, THAT I PERCEIVED MYSELF TO BE A CHOSEN CHAMPION OF HOPE AND LIFE...

'...AND I REALISED THE ABHORRENCE OF THE OUBSES I OPPOSED.



EMBRACE THE BEAUTY OF DESTRUCTION. MOTH-PRAY.

'BUT I WANTED TO KNOW WHY I HAD NOT BEEN TOLD. WHY I HAD BEEN LEFT TO DISCOVER THE BANE FOR MYSELF.



'BUT THE POWER IN ME WAS NOT EASILY OVERWHELMED.



'IN VICTORY, I LEARNED THE DARKEST TRUTH.

'I WAS NOT A CHAMPION CREATED TO DEFEAT THE BOSCHE, OR ANY SUCH AGGRESSOR TO MY COUNTRY...



UUNNN-N?

HSS

YOUR TEETH ARE SHARP PENDRAGON, BUT MINE HAVE VENOM...

'THE PAIN WAS NEARLY OVERWHELMING...



'MY FOE WAS A YOUTH IN THE TUNIC OF THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE. AND SO MY TRUE FOE WAS NOT SOME WARRIOR OF A FOREIGN POWER, BUT THE DARK SIDE OF HUMANITY ITSELF... THE LOVE OF WAR, OF VIOLENCE, OF DESTRUCTION...













SORRY ABOUT THIS, SQUIRE.
MY DESPATCHER SAYS THE
TRAFFIC'S BACKED UP FR'OM
PARLIAMENT SQUARE.

WHAT'S THE
HOLD UP?

I FEEL THE SPARK AGAIN.
CAN? ARE YOU NEAR?



AN EXPLOSION OR SUMMAT,
NEAR GREEN PARK. JUST BEEN
ON THE RADIO NEWS. SOUNDS
LIKE THERE'S A WAR GOING
ON...

CAN I
WALK IT TO
ASTRA FROM
HERE?



ABOUT A FUEL LONG
DOWN HERE. CAN'T MISS
IT. YOU'LL GET THERE
QUICKER 'N ME AT THIS
RATE.

THANKS.

I CAN SMELL THE BANE...
CLOSE BY... LIKE SMOKE
IN THE AIR. QUIZZING
LIKE FLIES...



...ALMOST DEAFENING...



...AND SOMETHING
ELSE. ANOTHER
SPARK...

THAT MAN.

THAT MAN
THERE.



MY NAME'S GALLAGHER. I'D LIKE TO SEE KATE MCCLELLAN.

I'M SORRY, SIR. SHE'S NOT IN THE BUILDING AT PRESENT. WE ARE EXPECTING HER IN 500N. WOULD YOU CARE TO WAIT?



THANK YOU, I WILL.

NO PROBLEM WHATEVER.



...THOUGH POLICE HAVE RULED OUT CONVENTIONAL EXPLOSIVES, OMNI REPRESENTATIVES HAVE DECLINED TO COMMENT, BUT BYSTANDERS HAVE REPORTED THE PRESENCE EARLIER OF BOTH CAPTAIN BRITAIN AND UNION JACK...



...AS SPECULATION MOUNTS, POLICE HAVE CLOSED THE AREA UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. THIS IS RANDOLPH FREWIN, FOR ASTRA NEWS.

ARE YOU BEN GALLAGHER?

IT'S POSSIBLE.

I FEEL LIKE WE'VE MET BEFORE.

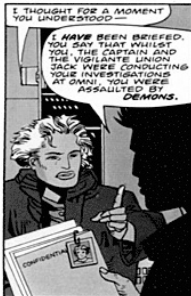
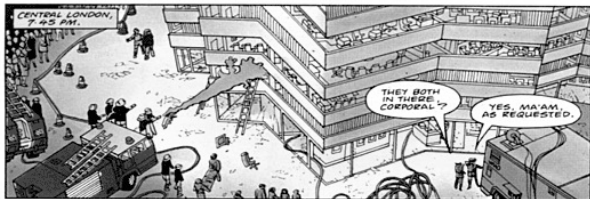


WE HAVEN'T, BUT IT'S AN UNDERSTANDABLE FEELING.

I'VE READ YOUR BOOK, MR. GALLAGHER — *FLAME IN THE WEST* — AN INTERESTING VERSION OF THE GRAIL MYTH.



I'M PETER HUNTER, TEACHER TO MS. MCCLELLAN'S SON CAM. I THINK IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR US TO HAVE A TALK.







9:45 PM.

...AND SO I... THANK YOU, KATE... SO I FEEL IT'S CRUCIAL FOR US ALL TO TALK ABOUT THIS. I HAVE SOME THINGS TO TELL YOU... YOU SHOULD NOT LET YOUR ATTENTION BE DISTRACTED FROM WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.

BETTER PICK SOMETHING AMBIENT AND UNOBTUSIVE, JOE.

YES'M.

ELVIS PRESLEY

FROM WHAT I'VE LEARNED OF YOU ALL, YOU'VE EACH ENCOUNTERED IN SOME FORM OR OTHER, THE FORCE OF THE PENDRAGON.

THAT'S JUST A NAME, THOUGH, IT HAS OTHERS.

SIMPLY EXPRESSED, IT IS THE POWER THAT INVESTS CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS WHEN IT BECOMES NECESSARY FOR THEM TO TAKE A STAND FOR THE COMMON GOOD. IT MAKES CHAMPIONS OF EXCEPTIONAL MEN... AND WOMEN, AND IT'S BEEN DOING THAT SINCE THE DAYS OF ARTHUR... OR EVEN EARLIER.

IT ATTUNES THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE NATURAL CYCLE, URGES HIM OR HER TO DEFEND THE ESSENTIAL FABRIC OF ALL THAT IS IMPORTANT... ALL THAT IS 'GOOD' TO USE AN INADEQUATE WORD.

AND IT TEACHES US TO RECOGNISE THE THREATENING Foe IN ITS TRUE FORM.

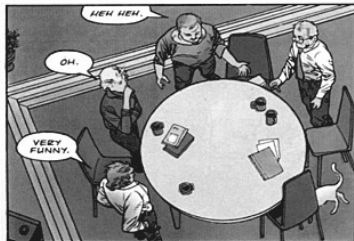
EACH PENDRAGON CARRIES WITH IT THE PAST INCARNATIONS OF ITS CHAMPIONS. I KNOW THIS... BECAUSE...

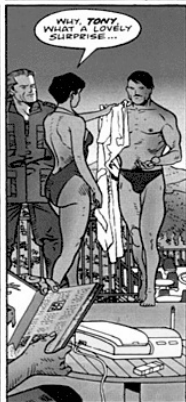
...BECAUSE EARLIER THIS CENTURY I WAS A PENDRAGON TOO. I WAS A NATIONAL CHAMPION KNOWN AS 'ALBION', POSSESSED BY ONE OF THE EARLIEST, MOST PRIMAL SPIRITS. HEZNE THE HUNTER'S SPIRIT IF YOU LIKE.

THAT FORCE HAS LONG SINCE LEFT ME. THAT FORCE, I'M SURE, HAS INHABITED YOUR POOR SON CAM, MY DEAR.











SO IT'S SAID, LOCAL LORE...
THE STORY GOES THAT IF
YOU TRY AND COUNT THEM
YOU MEET SOME NASTY FATE.

LEGEND SAYS A BAKER
ONCE TRIED TO COUNT THEM
OUT BY PUTTING A FRESH
LOAF ON EACH, BUT THE DEVIL
CAME ALONG BEHIND EATING
THE BREAD...



...AND THEN
THE BAKER.

ONE... TWO...
THREE... I
DON'T BELIEVE
IN THE DEVIL.
YOU SEE.



WHY NOT? YOU BELIEVE
IN A LOT OF OTHER
THINGS, AND 'DEVIL'
IS JUST A NAME...
LIKE 'BANE'.

HMMM...
FOUR...
FIVE...



HONESTLY...

...IT IS SNOWING.
THANK YOU VERY
MUCH. I DON'T—



DO YOU
FEEL
THAT?

JOE?

DO YOU
FEEL THAT?



THERE'S
SOMETHING
FOLLOWING
US.





"AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN — ROOST BITE. GOD, PETER, A WHOLE HAYSTACK HAS JUST PUT THE PROVERBIAL CAMEL IN TRACTION.



"IF I EVER BELIEVED ANY OF YOUR NONSENSE, I DON'T NOW. YOU CAN HAVE THIS WRETCHED THING WHEN I FIND IT, AND THEN IT'S GOODBYE ALL. THANKS FOR WASTING MY TIME.



"HERE IT IS. HERE IT IS. HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED, PETER. HUNTER. IT'S JUST AS NAFF AND NASTY AS THE DAY I BURIED IT.



"ONE WHOLLY CRASS GRAIL, AS USED BY OUR LORD AT THE LAST HAPPY EATER BEFORE JERUSALEM. CAN I GO NOW?"



"WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?"



PETER?
PETER!
KATE!

"I FEEL... I FEEL LIKE I DID WHEN I FACED SCARFAN IN THE ORENETS. UNREAL... TORN INSIDE... NO NO NO..."

